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ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Arlington, Massachusetts
Middlesex, ss

DOCKET NO. 3638

DECISION
Special Permit Under
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: 400-402 Mass Avenue, LLC
Property Address: 400-402 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02474

Hearing Dates: December 7 and 21, 2020; January 4, February 22, and March 1, 2021
Date of Decision: March 1, 2021

20 Day Appeal Period Ends: March 29, 2021

Members
Approved

Edward B. Bunker

Nancy M. Wat

John

Rachel J. Zember

Opposed

Town Clerk's Certification

Date



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Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
Department of Planning & Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Environmental Design Review Docket #3638
400-402 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474

March 1, 2021

This Decision applies to the application by 400-402 Mass Avenue, LLC, to establish a mixed-use building with three (3) residential units and two (2) commercial office units at 400-402 Massachusetts Avenue within the B1 Neighborhood Business District. The Board reviewed and approved an Environmental Design Review Special Permit in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review.

A public hearing was held on December 7 and 21, 2020, and January 4, February 22, and March 1, 2021. The public hearing was closed on March 1, 2021, and the docket was approved by a vote of 4-0.

Materials reviewed for this Decision:

- Application for EDR Special Permit including dimensional and parking information, dated October 15, 2020, updated November 7, 2020 and February 24, 2021;
- Narrative and impact statement dated October 15, 2020 and updated November 7, 2020;
- Building Façade Photos, dated October 15, 2020 and updated November 7, 2020;
- Existing Floor Plans, prepared by Lagrasse Yanowitz & Feyl, dated February 23, 2021;
- Proposed Floor Plans, prepared by Lagrasse Yanowitz & Feyl, dated February 23, 2021;
- Photograph of existing signage;
- LEED Considerations, prepared by Lagrasse Yanowitz & Feyl, dated October 15, 2020 and updated November 7, 2020; and
- LEED Checklist, dated December 11, 2020.

The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.3.3, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:

1. Mixed-use is allowed by Special Permit in the B1 Neighborhood Office District. The Zoning Bylaw, in Section 5.5.1 A, indicates that mixed-use buildings without retail space are allowed in the district.
2. The Master Plan recommends supporting commercial areas by encouraging new mixed-use redevelopment, including residential and commercial uses, in and near commercial corridors. This building is located in the Arlington Center commercial district and in close proximity to amenities located on Massachusetts Avenue. The corridor is served by transit and the site by existing infrastructure. Allowing one of the office units to become a residential unit encourages the vibrant commercial areas that the Master Plan envisions.
3. Five parking spaces are provided on the site. An EV charger will be installed and 3 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 6 long-term bicycle parking spaces located within the building. This building does not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.
4. The mixed-use structure has not and will not overload any municipal systems.
5. All special regulations applicable to the use are fulfilled.
6. The use does not impair the integrity or character of the neighborhood or is detrimental to health or welfare. The mixed-use building is in keeping with adjacent land uses along Massachusetts Avenue.
7. The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The mixed-use building is in keeping with adjacent land uses along Massachusetts Avenue.

The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.4.4, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:

1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape

There are no exterior changes proposed. Existing landscaping at the front of the building and along the Avon Place sidewalk will remain providing an inviting streetscape.

2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment

The mixed-use building is situated in a stretch of Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center that is zoned B1. Within this district there are: two mixed-use buildings of residential and office space; a funeral home; two two-family dwellings; a three-family dwelling; and a single-family dwelling. The mix of office space and residential space is consistent with the current uses in this B1 district. With no exterior changes to the existing building at 400-402 Massachusetts Avenue, there will be no change to the existing architectural pattern along this stretch of Massachusetts Avenue.

3. EDR-3 Open Space

The existing open space remains as there are no exterior changes to the existing structure. The site includes 864 square feet of landscaped open space and zero square feet of usable open space.

4. EDR-4 Circulation

The first 3,000 square feet of mixed-use buildings is exempt from the parking requirement (Section 6.1.10.C.), providing five parking spaces is consistent with the requirements of Section 6.1. Providing tandem (stacked) parking is also consistent with the bylaw. In addition to the five parking spaces, short-term and long-term bicycle parking and storage, an EV charging station, and a shower in one of the office units are provided.

5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage

The existing surface water drainage remains unchanged from the current condition. Stormwater runs off the site and enters the municipal drainage system.

6. EDR-6 Utilities Service

There will be no any changes to utility service.

7. EDR-7 Advertising Features

The existing signage will remain and new signage may be installed for the second office unit. Any new signage would require review by the Redevelopment Board and the Arlington Historic Districts Commission due to the location in the Avon Place Historic District.

8. EDR-8 Special Features

A solid waste and recycling enclosure will be installed to the rear of the building within the parking lot.

9. EDR-9 Safety

The building conforms to all code requirements for open and enclosed spaces.

10. EDR-10 Heritage

There are no exterior alterations proposed to the building other than the future installation of signage for the second office unit. If exterior changes are needed, including the future installation of signage, a Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained from the Arlington Historic Districts Commission due to being located within the Avon Place Historic District.

11. EDR-11 Microclimate

There will be no adverse impacts on air and water resources or on temperature levels of the immediate environment.

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12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design

Sustainable building practices are included as part of the renovation to enhance the operation and efficiency of the building.

The Redevelopment Board made the following finding upon approval:

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1. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with Environmental Design Review per Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.

The project must adhere to the following general conditions:

1. The final sign, screening, landscaping, and lighting plans shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board or administratively approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.
3. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
4. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with the Town Bylaws.
5. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the owner shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
6. All utilities serving or traversing the site (including electric, telephone, cable, and other such lines and equipment) shall be underground.
7. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Applicant shall file with the Inspectional Services Department and the Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.